

Family Resource Centers (FRC) A Lifeline to Our Neighbors in Need

- [Mike Kazmierski](#)
- [January 23, 2025](#)



[As Seen In the Reno Gazette Journal](#) | [Image Source](#)

As we look to the New Year and consider our resolutions to improve our lives, our community, or the planet, I encourage you to add “*support for our local Family Resource Centers*” to your list. The state Legislature created Nevada’s Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in 1995, strategically placing each facility in an at-risk neighborhood where families could receive direct services and referrals to social service agencies designed to meet their needs. Over the past thirty years, the FRCs have successfully provided countless assistance to Nevada families in need. Unfortunately, the current situation is frightening as the rising demand for assistance is met with diminished funds. Low-income households spend more of their income on necessities (e.g., food, rent, transportation, and utilities) and are disproportionately impacted by rising inflation. The ever-increasing need for FRCs and their resources far outweigh the available funding.

Family Resource Centers (FRC)

What is an FRC, and what do they do? The mission of the Family Resource Centers is to strengthen families by building a network of support and improving access to needed resources. The FRC model is one of the best “front-line” mechanisms to help families experiencing severe financial difficulties while struggling to find jobs or pay the rent. As a trusted resource in the community, FRCs can provide families with guidance and assistance as they apply for financial

relief through various community programs, which may have confusing criteria or unexpected deadlines. Family Resource Centers can also provide resources for basic needs such as food, clothing, utility, and rent assistance. Family Resource Centers can efficiently and effectively assist these families under extraordinary economic and social stress.

Effective but Underfunded

If they are so important and effective, why are they underfunded? Like many programs that the government starts, over time, the burden of the program shifts to the local governments and non-profits. There is no dedicated federal or state funding earmarked for these centers, so getting grants or raising funds falls on the agencies working at the centers. In our community, that is the Washoe County School District and the non-profits working at the centers. Yet, the services provided in the centers are available to the entire community, not just to school district students and their families, and the costs are not part of the district's funding. While the pandemic provided additional funding opportunities for the centers, the American Rescue Plan Act funds have dried up. If we don't act now, two of our five local FRCs will close this June.

An Ounce of Prevention Is Worth a Pound of Cure

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It should be no surprise that helping local families early is a win-win. Not only do we help our neighbors in need, but we also save countless taxpayer dollars in the long run. An FRC costs around \$160,000 a year to operate while helping thousands of families in need. The services provided include basic needs, but more importantly, they assist families by connecting them to other federal, state, and local programs that can help. So, this "ounce of prevention" saves us millions of dollars in the long run as we help these families:

- stay in their homes (reduced homelessness)
- retain their jobs (less unemployment and more available employees)
- keep their children in school (reduced dropouts and crime)
- create a path to self-sufficiency (reduces government dependency, like welfare)

Worthy Community Goal Needs Your Help

This is a worthy community goal that needs your help. More than 10,000 of our kids in Washoe County live below the poverty level and experience food insecurity. We need to take care of our own. A recent task force identified that our community **requires at least seven FRCs, with the funding currently available for just three.** With each center costing \$160,000 annually, our goal is to expand from the three currently funded FRCs to the seven centers we urgently need. I am confident we can unite and find a way to support the tens of thousands of families in need of a hand-up in these difficult times; most of the families are single parents working to support their children: our future citizens, employees, and community leaders. What a great way to start the New Year as we strengthen our community together.

For more information on Family Resource Centers, contact Rechelle Murillo at RMurillo@washoeschools.net.

To provide support, please contact Rachel Tatro at Blueprint Collaborative. rachel@theblueprintcollaborative.com

Strengthen our Community (SoC) is a non-profit (501c3) committed to developing cooperative, caring solutions to regional needs, with a special emphasis on education, families, good governance, and environmental sustainability. SoC is dedicated to confronting the important but complex issues in the region that have been difficult or even impossible to resolve. For more information on Strengthen our Community please get in touch with us at info@socnnv.org or 775-350-1465.



[Mike Kazmierski](#)

Mike Kazmierski is the executive director of Strengthen our Community.